

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I am going to draw a comparison between the two novels which have been analyzed in the two previous chapters. These two novels deal with the oppression of Aborigine people and Chinese immigrants which becomes the main topic of the novels.

Racial discrimination faced by the Aborigines and Chinese immigrants basically happens because the white people tend to apply Ethnocentrism. They have the tendency to judge other groups by the standards and values of one's own; this produces a view of one's own group as superior to others. I presume that Ethnocentrism can lead to extreme behavior and the claim of superiority. In the two novels, the act of superiority results in the form of racial discrimination towards the minority. The racial discrimination in both novels is mostly manifested in the form of individual and institutional discrimination.

The individual and the institutional discrimination experienced by the Aborigines and the Chinese immigrants are presented by the portrayal of the major characters and supported by some historical data. In *Drift*, the idea of

individual discrimination is mostly experienced by Aborigine women who are raped and also Aborigine men who are treated severely in the reservation place while the institutional discrimination can be seen through the idea of the white who put them in the reservation place and treat them like animals. Finally, the reservation place becomes the prison for the Aborigines.

However, the discrimination in *Birds of Passage* is presented in two different forms, namely individual and institutional racism. These two issues are presented through the major characters who act as the narrators in the novel. The first narrator, Seamus O'Young, suffers from identity crisis because his national identity is always questioned. As an Australian who looks Chinese, Seamus is often treated as an outsider, and is mocked and called Ching Cong Chinamen. He often faces individual discrimination. The second narrator, Lo Yun San; however, suffers individual discrimination more as he, together with the other Chinese gold diggers, is physically abused. Meanwhile, the institutional discrimination can be seen through the exploitation of religion by the white society to discriminate the Chinese gold diggers.

It is interesting to notice that in most of Castro's works, he applies his ideas through two protagonists who turn out to be the narrators in each of the novel. In *Drift*, there are Byron Shelley Johnson and Thomas McGann while in *Birds of Passage* there are Seamus O'Young and Lo Yun San. All of the narrators are portrayed differently by the authors. In *Drift*, Johnson is portrayed as an observer who discovers and finds some evidences of the racial discrimination experienced by the Aborigines, while McGann is represented as a second voice who helps Johnson to find the truth by retelling the history that he knew. McGann's story has become verification to find the hidden truth. On the other

hand, Seamus O'Young in *Birds of Passage* is described as a victim of the racist condition in the society who leads him into having an identity crisis, whereas through Lo Yun San's journal, Seamus comes to a better understanding of himself because he realizes that the discrimination that happens to him also happens to the Chinese people 120 years before Seamus.

I notice that through the use of the two voices in each novel, Castro tends not to be subjective in revealing the racial discrimination. The revelation of the racial discrimination is now balanced as it is based on the comparison of what is experienced by both of the narrators in each novel.

It is interesting to notice that in both of the novels, Castro inserts some historical data. In *Drift* readers can know the massacre that happened to the Aborigines in Finders Island in 1820, while in *Birds of Passage*, the readers know the tragic event that happened to Chinese people in Lambing Flat in 1861. Apparently, Castro would like to remind the readers about the tragedies faced by the Aborigines and the Chinese in both his novels.

In *Drift*, the most significant historical data are the so-called Black War in 1820's where many Aborigines die in the war. But, the oppression of the Aborigines does not end there, the discrimination continues due to the extermination of the Aborigine people. The remaining Aborigines are placed at Flinders Island by the British government. Many of them are sick and die in custody.

Meanwhile, in *Birds of Passage*, the tragedy of Lambing Flat in 1861 happens as result of the whites' superiority that is very ethnocentric. The "anti-Chinese" movement is spread all over Australia during that time. The racial discrimination experienced by the Chinese immigrants is grounded in the white

Australian's hatred as the impact of their rejection to the existence of Chinese immigrants.

Through both of the novels, Castro would like to criticize the white people who tend to think in ethnocentrism. As long as people tend to think in that view, racism is endless. Furthermore, the pluralism is often seen as a threat by the white society; therefore, they cannot accept any differences from other immigrants who come from certain ethnic minority group to Australia. Finally, I conclude that racism should be erased. People have to admit that human beings are physically and culturally diverse but no one has the right to classify mankind in superior and inferior groups based on their differences.